

- (ii) Soft loans given for setting up of grading/processing centres, auction platforms, ripening/curing chambers and quality testing equipment;
- (iii) Grant of financial assistance for improved packaging and strengthening of quality control;
- (iv) Establishment of walk-in-type cold storage for export consignments awaiting clearance;
- (v) Setting up of Air cargo facilities for cargo booking and customs clearance facilities under one roof;
- (vi) Setting up of dedicated cargo handling facilities for perishables at airports;
- (vii) Establishment of vapour heat treatment facilities for improved acceptability of the products;
- (viii) Implementation of a UNDP Project on Floriculture for enhancing productivity and exports of floriculture products particularly cut flowers;
- (ix) Provision of air freight subsidy for selected floricultural, horticultural products and fresh vegetables;
- (x) Organisation of export promotion activities such as buyer-seller meets and participation in Internal Trade Fairs/Exhibitions.

Funds for Community Development

500. SHRI RAVINDRA KUMAR PANDEY : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) the funds allocated to the Central Coal Fields Limited for community development during the last three years and during the current year;

(b) the number of Developmental Works executed/to be executed out of the funds allocated; and

(c) the existing rule for utilisation of funds for community development?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) The funds allocated since 94-95 for community development in CCL is as under:

| | |
|---------|------------------|
| 1994-95 | Rs. 119.50 Lakhs |
| 1995-96 | Rs. 93.00 Lakhs |
| 1996-97 | Rs. 88.20 Lakhs |
| 1997-98 | Rs. 90.00 Lakhs |

(b) The number of development works executed during 1994-95 to 1996-97 and target for 1997-98 is as under:

| | |
|---------|-----|
| 1994-95 | 124 |
| 1995-96 | 224 |
| 1996-97 | 183 |
| 1997-98 | 240 |

(c) Funds for community development are utilised under community development plan, tribal sub plan and special component plan for the overall development of collieries and its surroundings.

Loan by H.P. Government

501. SHRI SUKH RAM : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Himachal Pradesh had raised loans aggregating to Rs. 424.85 crores during 1994-95 through H.P.S.E.B. and paid Rs. 34.02 crores as interest on these loans besides Rs. 1.97 crores had been paid as service charges;

(b) if so, whether the Government of Himachal Pradesh violated Article 293(3) of the Constitution of India by raising loan without concurrence of the Union Government as pointed out in C&AG Report for the year ended 31st March, 1995 No. 3; and

(c) if so, the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) This has been reported by the CAG in his Report No. 3 of Himachal Pradesh for the period ending 31.3.1995.

(b) and (c) Article 293(3) of the Constitution of India prohibits raising of loans by the State Governments if there is any outstanding loan which has been made to the State Government by the Government of India or in respect of which a guarantee has been given by the Government of India except with the consent of Government of India. The report of the CAG had pointed out that in the instant case loan was raised by HPSEB though it was stated to be not for the purpose related to HPSEB. The report of the CAG has already been placed before the State Legislature for necessary action.

Airport Tax

502. SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH :
SHRI G.M. BANATWALIA :
SHRI P.C. THOMAS :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been any recent increase in the airport tax or FTT on international passengers;

(b) if so, the extent of increase indicating the reasons therefor and the amount per passenger that is payable now;

(c) whether the Government have received any representations to withdraw the increase in Airport tax/FTT;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government thereon;

(e) whether the standards and facilities at Airports are proposed to be increased;

(f) if so, the details of such proposals at each Airport; and

(g) whether there is any proposal under consideration of the Government to reduce this tax and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b) The Foreign Travel Tax has been increased with effect from 26th September, 1997 from Rs. 300/- to Rs. 750/- per passenger embarking on a journey to countries other than the neighbouring countries. The last increase was made in the year 1989 and the present increase has been made to keep pace with the allround increase in the costs associated with the foreign travel.

(c) to (g) The Government have received representations from various individuals and Associations, and they have been examined. There is no proposal under consideration to reduce this tax.

(e) and (f) The information is being collected and would be laid on the Table of the House.

Smuggled Goods and Foreign Currency

503. SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity and amount of smuggled goods and foreign currency seized by Customs officials and other agencies during each of the last three years till date, State-wise;

(b) the number of arrests made in each case; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to check the entry of smuggled goods and foreign currency in the country in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE : (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Vacant Posts of CMDs

504. SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) the number of vacancies of CMD's and Directors lying vacant in the subsidiary companies under Coal India Limited and Neyveli Lignite Corporation and since when these vacancies are lying vacant;

(b) the reasons for not filling these vacancies;

(c) whether officers joining as DIC's retire after years of service as such without being regular specially in Mahanadi Coal Fields;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the remedial steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) and (b) The position regarding vacancies in board level posts in CIL subsidiaries and NLC Limited is indicated below:—

| Name of Post | Date of Vacancy | Reasons thereof |
|-------------------------|-----------------|---|
| 1. Dir (Fin) NLC | 1.3.96 | Approval of the competent authority is awaited. |
| 2. CMD, MCL | 1.12.96 | |
| 3. CMD, SECL | 1.2.97 | |
| 4. CMD, CCL | 31.10.97 | Recommendations of the competent authority for empanelment awaited. |
| 5. Dir (Tech), CMPDIL | 27.9.96 | |
| 6. Dir (Tech), NCL | 18.12.96 | |
| 7. Dir (Tech), BCCL | 1.7.97 | |
| 8. Dir (Tech), CCL | 1.8.97 | |
| 9. Dir (Tech), ECL | 31.8.97 | |
| 10. Dir (Tech), WCL | 31.10.97 | |
| 11. Dir (Fin), MCL | 18.9.97 | |
| 12. Dir (Tech.), CMPDIL | 19.11.97 | Approval of the competent authority awaited. |
| 13. Dir (Per), MCL | 18.9.97 | |
| 14. DIR (P&P), NLC | 1.10.97 | |